the **Richmond Review**

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Richmond's Town Hall Covers Multiple Hot Topics

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Homeless encampments, police staffing at the Richmond Station, private and public transportation, angled parking on Geary Boulevard, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alexandria Theatre and graffiti were all hot topics at a recent town hall meeting.

The auditorium at the Richmond Recreation Center was packed with a standing-room-only crowd on Feb. 15 when District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan, San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu and Richmond Station Captain Chris Channing of the San Francisco Police Department discussed these issues and took questions from the public.

Capt. Channing said the Richmond Station is "suffering from staffing duress."

He said that about four years ago the Richmond Station had more than 90 assigned police officers, not including sergeants, lieutenants and the captain.

"Today they are in the low 50s. This is a 24-7 operation. I've got about six main shifts to fill," he said. "We do have the capacity and the ability to leverage overtime to support some additional efforts to allow these overtime funds to be used to really focus on foot patrols along corridors in need, which include Geary and Clement. And, as much as I am able to, I want to be strategic with where I put these officers."

Richmond District resident and contributor to the Richmond Review newspaper, Julie Pitta, asked what the City's policy regarding "homeless sweeps" was in light of the recent lawsuit filed by the Coalition on Homelessness.

"Homelessness itself is not illegal. What we're talking about is a systemic problem that affects society as a

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John Singer Sargent's Works Shown at the Legion of Honor

"Majorcan Fisherman" by artist John Singer Sargent is on display at the Legion of Honor through May 14 as part of the "Sargent and Spain" exhibit. Story on page 7. ***Photo by Julia Featheringill Photography. Image courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.***

4200 Geary Could Become 98-Unit Mixed-Use Complex

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Pending approval by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, 98 residential units of housing for low-income senior citizens will be built at Sixth Avenue and Geary Boulevard, where a former funeral home now sits.

The new building will provide 41 studio apartments and 57 one-bedroom units. Of these, 20 units will be reserved for homeless and formerly homeless seniors, the City will subsidize the rent for at least 30 units, 12 units will be reserved for military veterans and one unit for a resident manager.

The ground floor of the mixed-use seven-story building will provide 1,908 square feet of commercial space.

The apartments will house seniors with a range of low incomes, starting as low as 15% and up to 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI), defined as the midpoint of a given area's income distribution, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In San Francisco, 100% AMI works out to $97,000 annually for a single person, $110,850 for two people, $124,700 for three and $138,550 for four.

At a Feb. 15 meeting of the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Finance Committee, Sheila Nickolopolous, the director of policy and legislative affairs at the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), confirmed that the building will house low-income and formerly homeless senior citizens.

"This is the first affordable senior housing project in the Richmond since 2011," Nickolopolous said. "It's an important step in meeting housing element goals of bringing affordable units to high-resource neighborhoods. We acknowledge the significant need for more housing like this that can provide safe, affordable homes for aging adults on fixed low incomes."

The City acquired the property for $11,064,369 and will

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Summer Resource Fair Features Enrichment Opportunities

By Kate Quach

Woven along the outer gates of the Botanical Garden, colorfully fringed tents flapped in the brisk Golden Gate Park breeze. Calvin, 11 years old, shrugged off the lightly drizzling Saturday afternoon weather, bounded past his dad, David Tracy, toward the open double doors of the County Fair Building. Inside, a party of pop music, dancing and creative play zones ranging from archery to candle-making launched Calvin into the event.

"We showed up and we didn't know they were going to have all of these activities for the kids to try out," Tracy said.

Over the course of the day, more than 2,400 people explored the 100 summer camps and programs exhibiting at the San Francisco Summer Resource Fair on Feb. 11. At its first reappearance since 2020, the Fair was designed to extend summer enrichment opportunities to interested families, especially those with children with disabilities. Tracy expressed that while building an educational summertime agenda for Calvin, who is autistic, could be difficult, the Resource Fair gave them both the chance to engage in the City's offerings.

"Finding things that are resources for kids like Calvin is going to be a challenge," Tracy said. "But this is such an amazing opportunity to be out there and have fun."

Tracy, an active parent in the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department's Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services team's summer camps, re-enrolls Calvin in their inclusive Everybody Travels city sight-seeing program every year as Calvin holds special interests in public transportation and travel.

Lucas Tobin, supervisor of Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services, advocates for the adventurous nature of children with disabilities.

Zumba was one of about 100 exhibitors at the SF Summer Resource Fair on Feb. 11 at the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. ***Photo by Kate Quach.***

"We know that kids do better academically if they're doing camps and other engaging things during the summertime," explained Tobin. "Our goal is helping kids with disabilities have access to enriching activities during the summer so that they're able to keep learning and keep having social interaction through healthy physical activities."

Mimi Schiffman and her 4-year-old daughter Sierra found themselves stumbling into the engaging activity booths and opportunities; it was a lucky surprise discovery after receiving their COVID-19 booster shot next door. Schiffman, enjoying the resources available throughout the fair, appreciated the upbeat encouragement of summer-

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Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Bandshell

How did Hawaiian sugar contribute to placing a bandshell in Golden Gate Park?

In September 1882, 12 musicians in San Francisco started what would become the Golden Gate Park Band to perform regular concerts in the park at its first bandstand, a wooden one in "Conservatory Valley." The Park's second bandstand in 1886 was at the site of the present-day tennis courts, according to the book "Five Thousand Concerts in the Park: The History of the Golden Gate Park Band," by David W. Bandy.

In December 1890, the King of Hawaii visited San Francisco and attended a park music performance. Hawaii was a monarchy until the 1893 overthrow. Hawaii was annexed as a U.S. territory in 1898, then became the 50th state in 1959.

The band's audience size outgrew the second bandstand, leading to the construction of the third and present bandstand in the park, the Spreckels Temple of Music with a capacity of 20,000 in the Music Concourse.

Claus Spreckels was a German immigrant to the United States. He made his fortune in sugar, including sugar from the Kingdom of Hawaii subject to favorable trade treaties. He paid $75,000 out of the $78,810 construction cost of the bandshell, according to the book "San Francisco's Golden Gate Park: A Thousand and Seventeen Acres of Stories," by Christopher Pollock, historian-in-residence at the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

The president of the park commission, Adolph Bernard Spreckels, convinced his father Claus to donate funds for the bandstand's construction, according to Gary Kamiya's book "Spirits of San Francisco Voyages Through the Unknown City." General William Henry Linow Barnes, a prominent lawyer and major-general of the National Guard of California, accepted the Temple gift on behalf of the City's people. Thirty thousand people attended the dedication, according to the SF Chronicle.

Inscribed on the southwest wall of the bandshell is:

Gift of Claus Spreckels

On the northwest wall of the bandshell is inscribed:

Dedicated September IX MDCCCC

which is the date Sept. 9, 1900, in Roman numerals.

The Spreckels Temple of Music, on the western edge of the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park, was dedicated on Sept. 9, 1900. Construction was made possible with a gift of $75,000 by Claus Spreckels, an industrialist who made his fortune in the sugar industry. His son, Adolph Spreckels, was an heir to the sugar fortune. He married Alma, a woman 24 years his junior. She may have coined the phrase when she referred to her older husband as her "sugar daddy." *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Sept. 9 is the anniversary of California Admission Day, when California became the 31st state of the U.S. in 1850.

Spreckels mentioned at the dedication that free music is attractive to rich and poor. Since he saw that Golden Gate Park was already attracting so many people, he decided that the park was a good place to provide music.

Brothers James and Merritt Reid were the architects, according to a landmark designation report for the Music Concourse. Corinthian columns are elaborately decorated at the top of both sides of the 72-foot-tall bandshell. Extending out from sides of the bandshell are eight pairs of Ionic columns with simpler scroll-like ornamentation at the top. Sandstone from Colusa County northwest of Sacramento is the main original material in the bandshell. The sunken sandstone panels in the bandshell's half-domed stage ceiling serves the purpose of reflecting music, according to the landmark report.

Robert Ingersoll Aitken sculpted two 20-feet by 42-feet semi-nude figures, one playing a lyre, the other a trumpet in the spandrels, the gap between the curve of the arc of the bandshell's half dome and straight walls. Aitken, born in San Francisco in 1878, later sculpted the McKinley monument in Golden Gate Park, described in this column in February 2021.

The 1906 and 1989 earthquakes damaged the bandstand causing the Golden Gate Park Band to temporarily play at other venues. In addition to the earthquake repairs, more seismic upgrades were done in 1994 by Alameida Architecture, according to its website.

In 2022, 20 accessible parking spaces were added to the bandshell parking lot as part of Rec. and Park's Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program. The bathrooms at the bandshell's rear were added after 1943.

The band's Sunday musical concerts traditionally started with the Star-Spangled Banner and from the 1930s to mid-1950s ended with God Bless America, according to Nathaniel L. Pergamit's thesis on the band's history. Singers have often joined the band's wind instruments in concerts.

Pergamit also wrote about the composers (excluding the aforementioned traditional songs) whose pieces the band played at the most performances. John Phillip Sousa was the most played composer for the 1900-1929 era but fell to 16th place from 1930 to 1945. Victor Herbert was most popular from 1930 to 1960. Richard Rodgers was most popular from 1961 to 1971.

In a concert in 1967, the band played "You'll Never Walk Alone" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical "Carousel." Pergamit noted the contrast between that concert and the hippie countercultural Human Be-In a few hundred yards away in a different part of the park the previous day.

The Band's Centennial Concert in 1982 was held in San Francisco's City Hall at the invitation of then-Mayor Dianne Feinstein. The musicians' then-new red uniforms have remained the Band's standard.

The Golden Gate Park Band is a non-profit organization providing free concerts to the people of San Francisco on behalf of Rec. and Park. Band members are professional musicians and members of Musicians Union Local 6. The band had 30 musicians as of Sam Whiting's Aug. 1, 2021, article in the SF Chronicle. Due to curtailed in-person events in 2020 and 2021 because of COVID, and changes in funding rules, annual funding for the band can be challenging as around 60% of the band's 2023 operating budget is from San Francisco Grants for the Arts, and the rest is from donations from the public, according to the band's website.

The text "Lift Every Voice" in 4-foot, 3-inch-tall bronze-coated aluminum letters on top of the bandshell was unveiled on Dec. 1, 2021, a two-year installation by the non-profit Illuminate the Arts, according to Jessica Flores writing for the SF Chronicle. The words refer to a hymn by civil rights champion James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," also known as the "Black national anthem," according to a press release by the mayor's office.

The Spreckels Temple of Music is at the west end of the Music Concourse. Free concerts at the bandshell by various performers (other than the band) starts on March 1, 2023 according to https://sfrecpark.org/1570/Golden-Gate-Bandshell-Concerts. The 2022 season featured genres like rock, rhythm and blues, soul and jazz. The Golden Gate Park Band's free Sunday 1 p.m. concerts begin on April 30, 2023.

Find an archive of Kinen Carvala's "Looking Back" columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com

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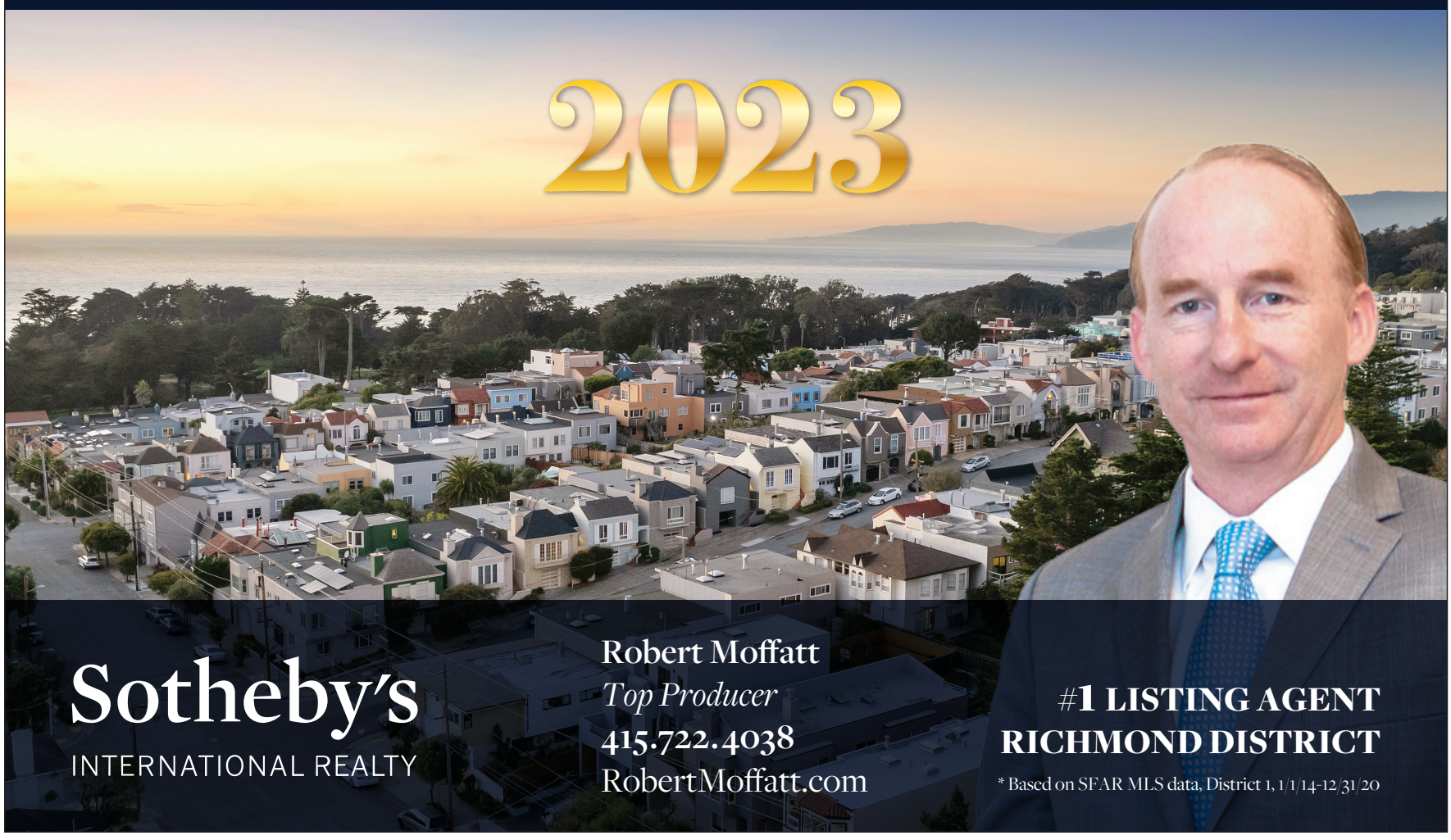

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Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

Diversifying Juries With Higher Pay

Serving as a juror is a meaningful opportunity for impactful civic engagement, allowing everyday people to participate in our legal system and in our democracy. Yet, there continues to be a lack of adequate and proper representation in our juries.

While California requires employers to provide time off for jury duty, they are not required to pay their workers while they serve on a jury. If a juror's job does not cover their wages or salary, the court system compensates them nothing on their first day of service, then only $15 per day after that. The stipend hardly covers gas and parking, let alone lunch in many places.

Consequently, a potential juror often claims financial hardship, so they can go earn their full paycheck instead. That means juries are frequently less diverse and tend to be wealthier. It is fundamentally unjust for potential jurors to opt out due to financial constraints.

In order to address the disproportionate and inequitable jury composition, I have proposed AB-881, or "Be the Jury California." It increases daily compensation in criminal cases for low- to moderate-income Californians to $100 a day, making jury duty more accessible to all Californians.

To qualify, a juror's earnings for the past 12 months must be less than 8% of their area's median income. He or she must also meet at least one of the following:

• Their employer does not compensate for jury service; or

• Their employer does not compensate for the estimated duration of jury service; or

• They are self-employed; or

• They are unemployed.

Additionally, for jurors who don't meet the above criteria, AB-881 makes $15/day the base pay, as opposed to the cap. This gives courts the flexibility to pay more, if they can and are able to.

This new proposal is modeled after a 2021 bill I authored, AB-1452, which allowed San Francisco to try out a similar program. Since its implementation locally, the results have been substantial.

• 81% of participants say they could not have served without the $100 per day stipend.

• Program participants reflected the racial demographics of the broader San Francisco population with 63% of participants self-identified as people of color.

My hope is the higher pay will result in more diverse juries up and down the state, just like it did in San Francisco. A fundamental aspect of democracy in the United States is the right to a fair trial and a jury of our peers, which means a jury of equals, drawing from different races, genders and socioeconomic classes. But due to the steep financial hardship facing potential jurors, jury service – in its current form – is a luxury for people to participate in. It's an incredible sacrifice to serve for workers who are surviving paycheck-to-paycheck.

AB-881 is a crucial reform to our criminal legal system. It will make our juries more illustrative of California's great diversity by establishing a greater incentive for working-class and low-income Californians to serve on juries.

I thank our San Francisco partners at the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, Treasurer's Office, Superior Court and Bar Association for working to diversify juries in our City. It's now time to make similar strides statewide.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

City Hall

Supervisor Connie Chan

The Equitable Recovery Act

Since April 2020, like the rest of the world, San Francisco has suffered economic setbacks due to the global pandemic. Many people were priced out of San Francisco, and continue to be priced out. Those who are able to stay often struggle to earn a living wage, stay housed comfortably, and stay healthy and safe.

Now, our city leaders are looking at the activity of our downtown as the most significant economic indicators and focusing on the area as a way to revitalize our local economy. But there were already signs of major problems for the City prior to the pandemic – working people were steadily getting priced out, tenant evictions and buy-outs were daily occurrences. Our homeless count was soaring, property crimes were rapidly increasing, and empty storefronts and blight were such a widespread issue that San Francisco voters supported a commercial vacancy tax to curb the problem. A San Francisco Chamber of Commerce survey in 2018 showed the majority of San Franciscans thought the City was heading the wrong direction.

The reality is the pandemic likely accelerated our foreseeable economic bubble burst and compacted the negative consequences our City was facing in just a few short months. Still, this City by the Bay has always been beloved by many, and its history and characters, generations of immigrants, communities of color, LGBTQ community, and so many more who have called San Francisco their sanctuary, has made it a resilient city. As a result, San Francisco's local economy now becomes a volatile environment for long-term investment and sustainable gain. Yet many can still see its potential for a remarkable economic comeback.

As one of San Francisco's elected leaders, I am mindful of this economic volatility. In addition to working with the mayor, my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and I are actively identifying solutions that support robust economic activities. I also see a great need and an opportunity to correct the course we were previously on by establishing a healthy economic ecosystem that is sustainable and symbiotic for workers of all income levels, and small and corporate businesses.

In order to sustain an equitable local economy for the long term, we also have to consider the following factors in order for our budget to prioritize equitable recovery.

Boost Local Economy Equitably with Workforce and Business Diversity

The pandemic, a shift to remote working, and the expansion of online shopping has resulted in an estimated 147,303 fewer office workers downtown each weekday. While there has been an improvement in tourism since 2020, office attendance downtown remains well below pre-pandemic levels. Downtown workers in San Francisco bolstered the local economy, and if the area remains at a 40% office attendance, businesses stand to lose $1 billion in expenditures.

I am open to Mayor Breed's suggestion for the City to look into short-term strategies focusing on downtown to boost our local economy. In order to boost the local economy and support the growth of small businesses, I suggest the City utilize some interim control policies and other related permit and conditional use waivers to encourage diverse businesses to occupy vacant spaces so we can bring in and develop a more diverse workforce for San Francisco. The City should consider providing a short-term commercial tax credit for local artists and entertainers to occupy vacant storefronts. We should also look into waiving restrictions for non-retail use for vacant spaces above storefronts or vacant ground level spaces to create small business and start-up incubators to support innovative entrepreneurship.

Deliver Efficient City Services Through Accountability

Clean and safe streets are the basics that we must deliver for San Franciscans, yet the City is facing a $728 million deficit for the next two fiscal years. If we do not immediately close the deficit gap, the city's controller has forecasted that the City will face more than a $1 billion budget deficit by 2028.

So, as the Budget Committee Chair, I will be working closely with Mayor Breed to comb through every city departments' budget and hold city department heads accountable to deliver quality city services in a timely fashion, and allocate funding to these departments based on their performance audits and programming results.

In the coming months, I will be holding a series of public hearings on city departments' performance and measures to correct any overspending. I will follow this by working with City Administrator Carmen Chu asking her to report the results of her progress streamlining city operations since she took the position in 2021. I look to mandate a city services dashboard, so government service is accessible, and their performance – as well as their annual budget and spending – are transparent to the public.

Regional Approach to Address Homelessness as a Public Health Crisis

From the successful lessons we learned in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with Alameda, San Mateo, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, Sonoma, Napa, Marin and Solano Counties, and following the science, data and advice from public health officers from all counties, we should consider a similar approach to treat homelessness as the public health crisis that it is.

We need to coordinate and facilitate regional strategies with county public health officers to tackle health treatments involving the homeless population. It is important that we share our resources and coordinate collectively with all our local health care systems. The counties should also share resources and data to track regional homeless populations and services, including, but not limited to, providing shelter and health care facilities beyond city boundaries.

A Future of Right to Transit Access for San Francisco Residents

If we want to center the downtown area and consider it as the "heart" of our local economy, then our public transit would be the artery system to keep our City connected and moving. But our transit system is built and operated partly based on ridership revenue, and without consistent and dedicated funding sources, SFMTA continues to face uncertainty about ridership levels and revenues it could generate. So, the system is stuck in a chicken-or-egg dilemma, whether we should wait for ridership demand to return before restoring a bus line or service capacity, or operate based on a build-it-and-they-will-come approach.

That's why, as a commissioner on our County Transportation Authority, I look forward to working with our state representatives and regional transit partners to identify dedicated state and regional funding for our transit system to accomplish two goals. First, that we restore and expand our transit services and coverage areas to serve San Franciscans equitably, and second, that we work toward a future where starting with all our low-income residents, and then all San Francisco residents will have the right to access our public transit system no matter their economic status.

This means we must focus on funding the spending needed to build an efficient transit system, and to serve more San Franciscans. This will result in pumping more ridership into the system that transports people to downtown and connects them from different neighborhoods citywide for robust local economic activities.

Build a Village for Working Families to Care for Children and Youth

Many businesses have challenges to bring back their workforce to meet the growing demands, and many workers have challenges to find work that can pay them a living wage in San Francisco when the cost of living is one of the highest in the nation. For many working families, especially wage workers, the cost of childcare is a heavy financial burden, and sometimes the cost of care outpaces their wages. So, to build a diverse workforce and bring sustainable economic growth to San Francisco, we need to think long term about supporting working families to live and thrive in our city by caring for children and youth outside of school sessions.

We must build a village of services to provide wrap-around care for our children and youth, including safe and reliable transportation access for school-aged children and youth to receive care and attend enrichment programming outside of school hours and sessions.

In 2021, I led the efforts at the

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Feds Again Pause the Forced Removal of Laguna Honda Patients

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Federal authorities once again paused the forced removal of more than 600 patients from Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) until May. The 157-year-old institution, however, still lingers in an existential ICU of bureaucracy.

The hospital has not lost its license, but most patients there are covered by Medicare and Medicaid. Both programs terminated the hospital's participation after the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) decertified it because of deficiencies in safety protocols, improper hygiene practices by the staff and two nearly-fatal overdoses from illegal drugs brought into the hospital by patients.

In April 2022, the CMS terminated its Medicare and Medicaid payments to Laguna Honda.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services committed to giving the hospital financial help in relocating approximately 670 patients by mid-September, 2022.

Laguna Honda Hospital transferred 41 residents to other skilled nursing facilities and discharged an additional 16 residents. Of those, 12 people died within weeks or months of being transferred.

San Francisco sued the federal government for failing to provide adequate time to repeal the original citations. The City and CMS came to an agreement in July 2022 to pause transfers until Feb. 2.

On Jan. 13, the City Attorney's Office wrote the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requesting the pause in patient transfers be extended to May 30 of this year.

"LHH has satisfied its milestone obligations under the Settlement Agreement, has successfully implemented many improvements in care, is making progress in addressing remaining issues and is well on its way toward recertification," according to the letter sent by the City Attorney's Office.

More than 600 Laguna Honda Hospital patients got another reprieve from being removed from the facility as the City and federal government agencies try to iron out a solution to the problems that have plagued the facility. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

On Feb. 1, CMS notified the hospital that they now have until May 19 to come up with a recertification plan.

"CMS has considered Laguna Honda's request and agrees to provide Laguna Honda extended federal funding while the facility continues to pause resident transfers and discharges, until May 19, 2023, under the terms of the settlement/systems improvement agreement," according to the response letter sent by Jean C. Ay, the HHS San Francisco and Seattle Survey and Enforcement Division director.

"This extension of the pause does not extend federal funding past Nov. 13, 2023. Laguna Honda, therefore, is advised to manage its resources, including its plans to safely discharge and transfer residents, accordingly, and with that date in mind for when the skilled nursing facility will no longer receive any federal funding."

The city attorney's Jan. 13 letter requesting the extension of the pause in patient transfers discussed the impact that not doing so would have on the patients and their families.

"Because of its size, history, amenities and patient population, LHH is a unique facility in the country, providing critical care for many of San Francisco's most vulnerable residents, and its residents would be best served by avoiding unnecessary transfer trauma and remaining at LHH through the recertification process," the City's letter said.

"If transfers resume, elderly residents with dementia will face the confusion, disruption and the ordeal of being transferred away from their long-term caregivers for reasons they might not understand. For elderly residents, maintaining familiarity with people, place and surroundings is important for their orientation and stability.

"The harm that residents could face from being unnecessarily transferred from LHH is compounded by the fact that there are few skilled nursing beds available for LHH's residents in the Bay Area, or surrounding communities. Therefore, it is likely that LHH would be forced to transfer patients to counties outside of the Bay Area or even out of state. Transferring patients hundreds of miles from their home would uproot them from their family and friends, as well as removing them from the only caregivers they know," the city attorney's letter said.

The hospital faces yet another challenge, however, because when it renews its license, it might have to follow new rules wherein no more than two patients can share one bathroom, as opposed to three patients, which the old rules had allowed.

Unless there is a compromise on that as well, if it wants its license renewed, the hospital might have to remove 120 beds regardless, according to the hospital's Interim Chief Executive Officer Roland Pickens, who called this an "unsettled issue."

Meanwhile, another lawsuit seeking an injunction to stop further patient transfers has been filed against officials at both the CMS and the California Department of Public Health by attorney Louise H. Renne on behalf of four patients residing there.

"Our clients appreciate the pause;

Continued on page 6

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

Ready for the Spring Market?

The year is well underway, and like any other year, people are preparing for the big push in the spring real estate market. However, unlike every year, there is uncertainty in the air.

It seems like the COVID effect is behind us and not many people are even talking about it anymore. The market slowed down towards the end of last year with uncertainty in our economy and rising interest rates. Thirty-year mortgages rose from about 3% at the beginning of 2022 to about 7% in November. It dipped slightly to about 6% early this year and is currently hovering at about 6.5%.

With the low amount of inventory at the beginning of the year, we saw some multiple offers and overbidding again. Where it goes is anyone's guess at the moment. Currently, I am seeing more properties being prepared for the market and I expect a decent spring selling season.

If you are preparing your home for sale during this time, there are many more factors to consider. Have you ever wondered why some homes sell at a higher price than others? The answer lies in pricing and emotional appeal. Purchasing a home is a very emotional process and usually creates a very stressful time in the life of the purchaser. Many times, buyers are making the largest financial commitment of their lives and are unsure of whether they are getting the right deal.

Thus, when other people are offering on the same property, the multiple offers reassure buyers that they are making the right decision because others feel the same way about the home as they do.

As a seller then, how do you create these emotions so that your property will sell quickly and for the highest price in today's market? Preparing a property for sale is especially important because people today are busier than before, and thus they are looking for homes which are in move-in condition.

There are many inexpensive preparations work which will bring returns many times over for the sellers.

First of all, declutter the house. It's amazing how much stuff accumulates over the years. By removing large items of furniture and putting belongings away will make a home show larger than it is, and gives the impression that the home is spacious and well cared for.

Painting and freshening up the backyard can be inexpensive, and yet provide the impression that a home is well maintained. Refinishing the hardwood floors will do wonders for showing off the house.

If you want to go further, staging companies are available who will bring in complete sets of furniture to complement the age and décor of the house. We have found that this adds tremendous value, makes your home show like a model, and separates your home from others on the market. As Richmond and Sunset homes are selling for well above the $1 million mark now, the staging expense is becoming a smaller percentage of the selling price and thus makes more economic sense than ever before.

Buying is an emotional process. When a buyer walks into the home, I have a good feeling about whether he or she will buy that house. In order to obtain the highest possible price, buyers need to feel comfortable and know that this is the right home for them.

Marketing in our modern world is different from the past. Online presence plays a bigger role with most buyers deciding whether to go visit a property or not based on its internet presence. So virtual tours with good photos and videos are more important than ever.

Buying and selling a home is a stressful and emotional time in one's life and even more so during this uncertain time. But no matter what happens, there will be people who need to buy or sell. And that's when good advice is necessary from a professional to help to make that buying and selling decision as easy and painless as possible.

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of John M. Lee's columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Laguna Honda

Continued from page 5

it's a step in the right direction, but frankly there ought to be no transfers whatsoever," Renne said. "There's no need for it. There's no place elsewhere for the residents of Laguna Honda."

She also noted that the hospital is currently forbidden to accept new residents.

"That means there's a real backup at places like San Francisco General, where people who are in need of skilled nursing care and rehabilitation can't be placed at Laguna Honda. And because they're mostly poor people there's no place for them to go," she said.

Renne acknowledges that CMS found serious problems with the hospital's procedures and health standards, however, "that's no reason to evict innocent people. It's wrong and it's cruel. Why take it out on the patients?"

"Any mistakes have to be corrected; there's no doubt about that. But there's nobody that's died at Laguna Honda because of Laguna Honda care. They died because the feds and the state have ousted them. That's what's so outrageous about this," Renne said.

"This idea of 'we'll pause it here; we'll pause it there.' They're just toying with people's emotions."

San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone released a statement about Laguna Honda Hospital patients as well.

"For many decades, the hospital has been one of the very few publicly funded nursing homes in the country, one where many residents have found a haven," Cordileone said. "In the face of the current prospect of some infirm and elderly patients being transferred from their residences due to regulatory and funding concerns, I urge community leaders to ensure the stability and protection of vulnerable individuals. We pray that Laguna Honda may continue to be a haven for the poor, sick and elderly and that our brothers and sisters in San Francisco will be cared for as they face trials and illness."

Connie Chan

Continued from page 4

Board of Supervisors to provide $15 million for Free Summer Camp to public school K-8 graders. Mayor Breed also helped to support our school children as well – through her Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) and through philanthropic partnership, it collectively added $45 million to the Free Summer Camp efforts.

We can replicate the success of Free Summer Camp in 2021 by working together and leveraging existing public funds to gain philanthropic support. With this model of partnership, we can expand free care and enrichment programming before and after school sessions, including summer camp, and provide meals and school bus options for school age children to attend enrichment programming and access care.

When we take good care of our children and youth, we take good care of our future as a city.

Invest in Green Infrastructure to Lay a Foundation for a Sustainable City

According to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, nearly 70 public infrastructure projects were delayed due to PG&E creating obstacles to connect affordable housing, parks and emergency services to power. The project delays cost the City more than $10 million annually. While CleanPowerSF has helped our City move away from relying on the monopoly PG&E holds, we still rely on the company's aging distribution and transmission lines to deliver our power.

To move San Francisco forward to a sustainable future, we have to work on what is underground, and behind the walls, infrastructures that often are not visible to us but are critical foundations to keep the City going. And to invest and green our energy, water and sewage systems will help us gain stability in City's operation spending, as well as sustainability for our environment.

So as the chair of the San Francisco Local Agency Formation Commission, a commission that provides oversight of our municipal services, I will continue to push the City forward to acquire our power grid from PG&E and move away from the monopoly the company holds over so many city projects.

Then we must also continue to green our grid and power sources by investing in battery storage, study public acquisition and accelerate powering our infrastructure for public projects including affordable housing development.

The Equitable Recovery Act aims to build a future where all business sectors, big and small, all workers, wage and salary earners, everyday working San Franciscans citywide can continue to live in San Francisco and thrive.

Connie Chan represents District 1 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at 415-554-7410 or chanstaff@sfgov.org. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Legion of Honor Exhibit Explores the Spanish Influence on Sargent's Work

By Noma Faingold

Author Richard Louis Ormond, 84, perhaps the foremost expert on American expatriate artist John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), was marveling at the paintings while he walked through the six galleries of the "Sargent and Spain" exhibit at the Legion of Honor, which opened on Feb. 11 and runs through May 14.

"What does (Vincent) Van Gogh got that Sargent hasn't got?" he asked, knowing the answer. "He's highly experimental. These are almost abstract compositions."

London-based Ormond, who was awarded a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) for his cultural contributions as the former deputy director of the National Portrait Gallery and the director of the National Maritime Museum, as well as his many published works on Sargent and other artists, is pleased with the way the exhibition is laid out. As one of the curators of Sargent and Spain, he was invited to the opening.

"I like the spaciousness, in that each picture is given its room," he said. "It's also telling a story about the phases in Sargent's career. I think people like that."

The exhibit, which was first staged last fall at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., unfolds thematically in six sections, focusing on Sargent's seven visits to Spain, from 1879 to 1912. He spent significant time in 26 cities and towns, including Madrid, Seville and the island of Majorca. At the entrance to "Sargent and Spain," there is a large map on the wall, which traces his travels.

"One of the thrills of this exhibition is it gives us the vicarious pleasure of travel," said Emma Acker, associate curator of American Art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. "In a sense, we can visit these destinations through the artworks on view and really see Spain through Sargent's eyes."

The West Coast exclusive exhibition features a wide range of Sargent's oils, watercolors and pencil studies, as well as never-before-seen photographs from his personal collection. Even though he lived in Europe his whole life (residing in Paris and London), he influenced a generation of American artists.

One gallery is devoted to how such Spanish masters as Diego Velázquez, El Greco and Francisco Goya influenced his work. Sargent studied the expressive brushwork and high-contrast realism used by his hero, Velázquez. From 1879 to 1895, Sargent was registered as a copyist.

In the next chapter of his career, Sargent became one of the most sought-after society portraitists of his era in both Europe and America.

"His works seem to epitomize the glamour and elegance, but also some of the excesses of the so-called Gilded Age," said Acker.

Creatively, Sargent, who was born in Florence, Italy to American parents, was not satisfied with his commercial success as a portrait artist. He was looking for more substance and found it in Spain, in its landscapes, architecture, people, culture and spiritual traditions.

Galleries titled, "Dance and Music," "The Land and Its People," "Majorca"

Continued on page 9

Emma Acker (left), associate curator of American Art at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and author Richard Louis Ormond, pre-eminent expert on John Singer Sargent, discuss various aspects of the artist's work at a recent pre-opening event at the Legion of Honor. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

Letter to the Editor

Editor:

Citywide elections for the Board of Supervisors (BOS) means just one thing: money spent on advertising will determine who gets to become a supervisor.

I have lived in San Francisco since 1978, the last 30 years in the Richmond District. The idea that supervisors elected by District leads to "a much narrower and more parochial world view," (as stated in a recent letter to the editor) can't be right just on the face of it. If you have ever attended a BOS meeting, you know that every supervisor is intimately acquainted with the concerns of the other supervisors. How could it be otherwise? They have to work together to address neighborhood issues all over the City. Really, if I live in the Richmond, does that somehow insulate me from the concerns of the rest of the City? Representative democracy means having many different voices at the table, not just those who can afford to run a citywide campaign.

With district elections, supervisors and candidates can literally walk every block in their district and get to know

Continued on page 13

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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

Ruminations on Reparations

On April 19, 1972, John B. Connally, Jr., then-U.S. secretary of the treasury, declared at the American Society of Newspaper Editors meeting in Washington, D.C.: "A democracy unsatisfied (by support of the people] cannot long survive.... We live in)robably the most turbulent and tormented times in the history of this nation. Criticize ... disagree, yes, but also we have as leaders an obligation to be fair and keep in perspective what we are and what we hope to be."

Now that taxpayer claims overcharging the City and County for collecting and disposing trash from municipal properties have been paid by the monopoly known as Recology, Inc. in the amount of $25 million as a credit against future charges, citizens would expect the expired five-year contract with the monopoly for residential and commercial trash to foster competitive bidding for that garbage collection. An ordinance by the Board of Supervisors and mayor will effectuate the end of such monopoly. Your scribe expected Boara d President Aaron Peskin to introduce that long-deserved law, but at press time, there has been exasperating silence from the crafty Telegraph Hill official. Meanwhile, Republic Services won the municipal properties trash contract and is ready with others to bid for private properties' collection and environmental reclamation.

Last December, San Franciscans got a look at the handiwork of the San Francisco African American Reparation Advisory Committee's "Reparations Plan," prepared by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission staff and numbering 58 pages. It emanates from then-Board President Shamman Walton's February 2020 resolution adopted that December. The Committee consists of 15 members appointed by the Board of Supervisors, including someone who has experienced incarceration, homelessness and public housing residence.

The Committee recommends a $5 million payment to any African-American aged 18 years or older who satisfies two of eight criteria, some of which don't even mandate having lived in San Francisco or possessing even some flimsy connection to our City.

As the Washington Examiner noted last month, taxpayers whose forebearers didn't own slaves or died in the Civil War or possessed any U.S. ancestors before the Civil War, will pay "reparations," even to people convicted and imprisoned for crimes they committed.

As a Harvard Magazine reader commented last month, the collection line for taxpayer money will ultimately include women denied until 1919 their voting rights, handicapped people without government-enforced opportunities, Asians excluded from immigration to America or public schools herein, Jews enslaved in Egypt or suffering discrimination here. Everyone can seek such reward. With City Hall approvals, an independent "Office of Reparations" and a Reparation Stakeholder Authority "independent of the City and County" must be established and funded. Happy Days will be here again for such appointees.

While reparations were oozing through City Hall, the author of the legislation creating the San Francisco African-American Reparations Committee, the same Supervisor Walton, was confidentially exonerated by City Hall's Human Resources director on July 5, 2022, for verbally harassing Sheriff's Cadet Emare Butler who unsuccessfully appealed such whitewash to the Civil Service Commission where it was similarly denied. Walton had previously demanded Board of Education Commissioner Ann Hsu's resignation for use of alleged racist language. It's permissible, obviously, for him to use the N-word toward the young Black cadet who asked him to remove his belt and metal, like all others entering City Hall but, wait: Walton's Chief of Staff Natalie Gee announced the N-word is only racist if someone who isn't Black utters it, and the incident was "normal" communication between two Black males and a "sign of solidarity." You can't make this anemic result up!

Meanwhile, Harvard University's student newspaper, The Crimson, revealed that more than 80% of Harvard's faculty identify politically as "liberal" or "very liberal" and just 1% of those surveyed of 1,100 members of the faculty of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences characterized themselves as "conservative." None claimed to be "very conservative." Only 25% supported increasing faculty diversity by hiring more conservative-leaning professors and 31% opposed employing conservative professors to increase ideological diversity.

Thanks to the Common Sense Party (more on that in April) member Marc Norton, I'm pleased to report San Francisco Heritage on Jan. 25, 2022, conveyed a meritorious recommendation to our Planning Commission to preserve as historic 369 Valley St. (in Noe Valley), consisting of two "earthquake shacks" configured as one cottage, to save it from development. I second the effort.

As Civil War chaplain Father Abram Joseph Ryan noted in "A Land Without Ruins": "A land without ruins is a land without memories is a land without history." May we always commemorate San Francisco's fire and earthquake of April 18, 1906.

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, member of the SF Ethics Commission and retired judge.

State-of-the-Art Greenhouse Opening Soon in GG Park's Botanical Garden

By Linda Badger

The San Francisco Botanical Garden is about to realize its dream of opening a fully operational, state-of-the-art plant nursery to replace the deteriorated facilities it operated for more than 55 years.

"The new plant nursery will enable us to expand and enhance our plant collections and fulfill our vital role as a leading botanical garden, in service to the public while also supporting global conservation efforts," said Ryan Guillou, director of Collections and Conservation of the Gardens of Golden Gate Park.

The San Francisco Botanical Garden is home to many unique and threatened plants, from here and around the world, including its magnolias, high elevation palms and plants from cloud forest regions. Starting this summer, the gardeners and volunteers will work in a new nursery complex in the Botanical Garden to propagate and conserve these and other plants for its "living collection."

The new greenhouse under construction in the Botanical Garden will replace the deteriorated facilities that were in use for more than 55 years. *Courtesy photo.*

The Garden will also share seeds, cuttings and plants with other institutions promoting conservation, and will import new plants from around the world to diversify its own collection here in San Francisco.

Construction of the new nursery complex began in the fall of 2021 and is expected to be finished by this summer, but the project has been in development for more than a decade. The SF Board of Supervisors approved a proposed nursery complex in 2012, with the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society (SFBGS) agreeing to "gift" the complex to San Francisco if sufficient funds were raised to complete the project.

The design, approved by the Board in 2012, included a public learning center to teach San Francisco residents and students about horticulture and the plant world. In 2021, however, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department approved a simpler redesign submitted by SFBGS which eliminated the planned learning center due to cost considerations. The new nursery complex will focus on its primary function of growing plants and will not be open to the public.

The new nursery complex has a smaller footprint than the previous one, but unlike the previous nursery, it will be surrounded by fencing. According to SFBG, this will be less confusing to the public and is necessary for safety and the protection of plants and equipment.

SFBG is taking measures to mitigate disruptions due to the construction of the new nursery and fencing. As an example, the Garden is working with Tim Wong, a senior biologist with the California Academy of Sciences, to relocate the locally rare California Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly, which feeds on the pipevine plant growing on trails behind the nursery's new fence.

For the past few years, visitors to this area have been able to watch as the Swallowtail's black and orange spotted caterpillars fed on pipevine plants and emerged from their chrysalises as iridescent blue and black butterflies. Wong, also a Garden volunteer, has been moving the pipevine and remaining chrysalises to the Children's Garden to ensure that the butterflies

Continued on page 14

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Commentary

Brian Quan

Envisioning a Better Neighborhood

Playland at the Beach, Sutro Baths, the Cliff House, Topsy's Roost – these are some of the former attractions that used to bring people out to the western half of San Francisco.

Not just a sleepy bedroom community to house workers that would head into their downtown jobs, the Richmond District used to be a vibrant part of the fabric of San Francisco. A home to a rich variety of businesses and communities nestled just north of Golden Gate Park, I want to see the Richmond become a vital part of San Francisco's future.

Other than just the closures of landmarks on the far western edge of the district, I have seen longtime staples in the community face closure and disrepair. As someone who grew up going to Sugar Bowl Bakery and catching new releases at the Coronet Theater, I'm left to wonder "what are the places and stories we are leaving to the next generation?"

While there are many colorful stories and cultural artifacts from the 1960s and '70s that dominate the narratives of San Francisco, holding onto the past sucks the oxygen from creating a new identity for the Richmond. With the challenges and changes brought about by COVID, tech companies and working from home, what's the next chapter for the Richmond District and San Francisco?

For this future vision, I wistfully recall summer's past of Shaw Brothers' movie marathons at the 4 Star and hope they might return one day. But the new owners there are charting a new path with a gallery and cafe environment.

Holding out for things to remain the same would be burying my head in the sand about how hard it is to run a business in San Francisco. Every business is a risk and an experiment – supporting them creates an opportunity for our neighborhood business corridors to be the place for neighborhood residents who now work from home to connect with each other and grow roots in the neighborhood. While City Hall focuses on how to restore downtown, we need to understand our own role in deciding this future.

The past year has been full of elections that are going to lay the groundwork of the City for another generation. Based on the results of these elections, it is clear to me that education, public safety, small business and the public use of streets appear to be the topics du jour, with housing and homelessness seemingly a lower priority in the Richmond. Unfortunately, elections have a way of making decisions on these complex issues too binary and leave out a lot of the discussions and compromises.

As a community we can take a more direct action in affecting the direction of our neighborhood by voting with our dollars and our feet.

With these myriad challenges we all face, let's explore the next steps we can start taking to put us on a path to fixing them. Building back a vibrant Richmond will not be easy, so let's begin a conversation and start thinking creatively! There is no silver bullet to these challenges, and it will take all of the above solutions from building more housing, creating safer streets, increasing public transit and supporting small businesses to be effective.

As found in a 2019 National Institute for Transportation and Communities study, improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure was shown to have positive impacts on sales and employment in the retail and food service sectors. Envisioning a vibrant community allows these synergies to build upon each other where making streets more lively and safe for people walking and biking and helps small businesses.

One of the obvious things to me that I see working in this vein is the usage of car-free/car-lite spaces for "events" such as farmers' markets, Sunday Streets like Car-free Grant, the eastern portion of John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park and the Upper Great Highway on the weekends to draw crowds of people. This isn't a war on cars since these do have some negative impacts, but rather a call to see what improvements on the whole we can work together on to achieve better outcomes. These changes in some fashion are going to need to be part of this vibrant future, so we need to take care how these impacts are perceived. Engaging small business owners, families and seniors on ways to improve access to participate in these community building events is the starting point to sustainable solutions. When we communicate and converse about what is and isn't working, we can work to iterate and improve on this moment to create those new experiences and landmarks for a new generation to enjoy.

Brian Quan is a Richmond District native, co-leader of Grow the Richmond, president of the Chinese American Democratic Club, member of the Park Presidio-Sunset Lions Club and participant in monthly Refuse Refuse S.F. street clean-ups.

4200 Geary Blvd.

Continued from page 1

lease it to Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), which will operate the site.

An additional five feet of height will be allowed for the ground floor commercial space. And because it is "100% affordable," it will be allowed an extra 33 feet in height above the usual 40-foot limit, which will give the building three additional stories.

"It's a great site," District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan, who chairs the Budget and Finance Committee, said at the meeting. "It's right in front of the bus stop and walking distance to the farmer's market on Clement Street. We know that there is already NEMS (North East Medical Services) that is right there to be able to help some of the seniors if they need it."

This comes at a time when the City is under pressure from the California state government to build 82,000 units by 2031, a daunting task considering San Francisco averaged 2,550 units a year over the past two decades, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. The state's mandate would require the City to build more than 10,000 units each year.

Adding to the challenge is the requirement that 46,000 of the units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Cities that do not meet the state's mandate face cuts in funding for housing and transportation, and could also trigger the state to override local authorities in approving affordable housing projects.

But apparently these kinds of projects are very expensive for the City, as was discussed at the meeting.

"We have to figure out ways to get these projects done for less per unit," District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman said. "And at the same time, I'm very excited to see this project happening in a neighborhood that has been represented by supervisors who really want to see affordable housing happening in the Richmond and have often found, as I have found in District 8, challenges around sites."

Proposition A was a 2019 affordable housing bond measure for $600 million, with $250 million dedicated to senior housing.

"I am grateful to the voters for having passed the housing bond with the provision that we would try to focus at least some resources in high-opportunity areas, high-resource areas, that haven't seen a lot of affordable housing development," he said. "This is exciting. This will be a very positive addition to the neighborhood and let's try and get some more affordable housing to D1 and D8."

District 11 Supervisor Ahsha Safaí also voiced his approval at the meeting.

"This is one of the hardest types of housing to build, given the limited funding sources for senior housing," Safai said. "There's a fast-growing aging population that's in significant need of affordable housing and we want to ensure that that population is served and supported in San Francisco. So this is a really phenomenal project. I think this is a great addition to the community."

An artist's rendering shows the planned mixed-use complex with 98 residential units of housing for low-income senior citizens and retail space. Pending approval from the SF Board of Supervisors, the building will be at Sixth Avenue and Geary Boulevard, the site of a former funeral home. *Courtesy graphic.*

'Sargent and Spain'

Continued from page 7

and "Religion and Spirituality" in the exhibition cover scenes that most captivated the artist.

Sargent was enamored with flamenco music and was inspired by an internationally celebrated dancer, Carmen Daucet Moreno (known as La Carmencita). Two notable paintings of her are on display, one of her in mid-performance with her arm dramatically outstretched and the other a large-scale, glamorous portrait of her in a gold-colored embroidered gown, looking like a diva of her era.

"Sargent just skims that embroidery at the bottom," said Ormond, referring to the light touch of the brushstrokes. "It's one ravishing piece."

Ormond's favorite section of "Sargent and Spain" is the Majorca gallery. During this period, the artist was immersed in depicting everyday life and everyday people.

"Those are very earthy, powerful pictures," he said.

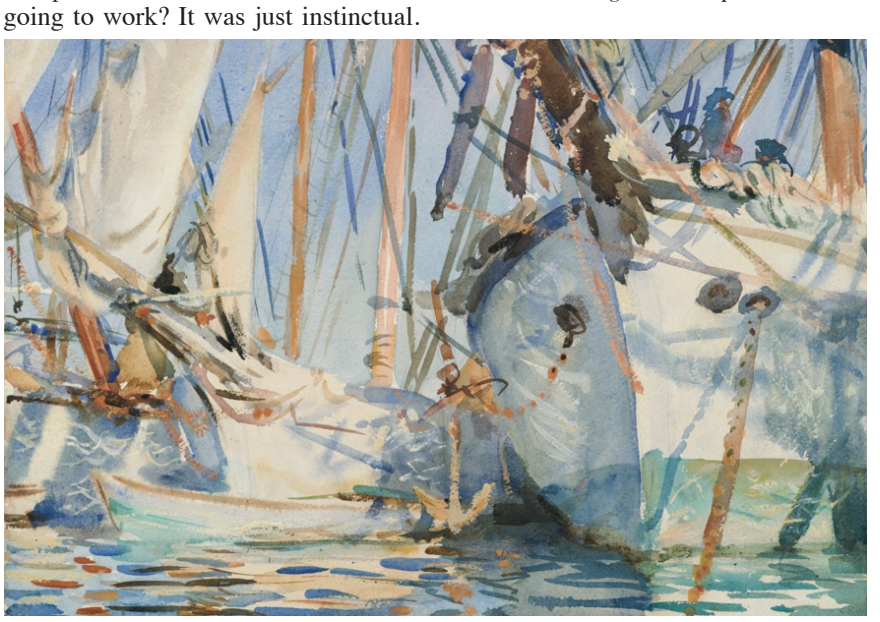
In particular, Ormond seemed endlessly fascinated by the complex, yet soothing painting, Majorcan Fisherman (1908), which is composed of a young fisherman off to the left side under a thatched roof, fishing gear draped over a flimsy wood railing, with the rich blue Mediterranean in the background. There's plenty of shadow mixed with sun-soaked light in the piece.

"As you look at it, you aren't sure where you are. You are completely ungrounded," Ormond said. "It's like a mosaic, like a tapestry. It's all about the paint, pattern and rhythm. When you come up close, it all seems to be messy. When you step back, it all falls into place. How did he know it was all going to work? It was just instinctual. He was so bold. He was always testing himself. He didn't waste anything."

Ormond continued to talk about the painting as if he were still discovering new things about it, even though he's been writing about Sargent for decades.

"Look at the fisherman's shirt and all the different tones. There's so much there," he said.

"Sargent and Spain" runs through May 14 at the Legion of Honor. March 20, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., will be Sargent and Spain Access Day. For more information and sign-up form: www.famsf.org/exhibitions/sargent-and-spain#events.



"White Ships" by John Singer Sargent. *Photo by the Brooklyn Museum, courtesy of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.*

Commentary

Julie Pitta

Myth Busters

By Julie Pitta

The job of a journalist is to inform and educate. The discussion prompted by last month's column on homelessness made me realize, all too painfully, that many of my Richmond neighbors hold mistaken beliefs about unhoused people. Some of those misconceptions, intended or not, seem tailor-made to justify denying unhoused people the support they so desperately need.

I'll attempt to set the record straight on the most frequently repeated myths regarding homelessness.

• **Unhoused People Are Not "From Here."** This is one of the most stubborn myths about homelessness and peculiar for a city where few can call themselves natives. Each year, the City takes a census of its homeless population, a requirement for any municipality seeking funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 2022, the City reported 7,754 people experiencing homelessness. Of those, more than two-thirds were previously housed in San Francisco. Interestingly, this myth is one frequently used in other cities with significant populations of unhoused people. It's used as a reason for withholding services to the unhoused.

• **Unhoused People Come to San Francisco Because of the City's Welcoming Attitude Toward the Homeless.** Most unhoused people lack the resources for travel and, if they did, it's hard to believe that San Francisco would be their dream destination. A recent Los Angeles Times article chronicled the challenges faced by one family seeking an apartment. After Reyna De La Cruz lost her job, she and her three children were reduced to living in a camper. Even with an emergency voucher from the San Francisco Housing Authority — a piece of paper that would pay most of her rent for years — De La Cruz could not find a single landlord willing to rent to her. Those not fortunate enough to hold an emergency voucher can — with difficulty — cobble together less than $1,000 each month, a pittance in a City where a one-bedroom apartment rents, on average, for more than $3,000 a month.

With the frequency of homeless sweeps, which were recently challenged by the Coalition on Homelessness, San Francisco is downright hostile to the unhoused.

The City's cruel attitude toward its unhoused population has infected the average San Franciscan, as evidenced by the recent attack on a homeless woman by a San Francisco art gallery owner.

• **Unhoused People Prefer Life on the Streets.** Unhoused people, like the rest of us, want a home. More than half are living on the streets. Those able to secure shelter space or other subsidized housing often live in miserable conditions, as reported by the San Francisco Chronicle. Mayor London Breed has yet to spend a nickel of the $5 million she pledged to fix homeless housing.

Many homeless people live on the street because they have no options. The City's failure to provide housing for those experiencing homeless is at the center of the Coalition on Homelessness recent lawsuit.

"In violation of the U.S. and California Constitutions, San Francisco enforces a series of laws that prevent unhoused residents from sheltering in the City's open spaces when there is no other shelter available," the suit alleges. "The City has also embarked on a campaign to seize and destroy the property of unhoused people with the express purpose of removing visible signs of homelessness from San Francisco's streets."

• **Most Unhoused People are Responsible for Crime.** A recent study from the University of Oxford found no correlation between property crime and homeless settlements.

"On average, an increase in the number of tents and structures in an area is not associated with any increases in property crime — very close to zero," said sociologist Charles Lanfear, the study's author. University of Miami sociologist Alexis Piquero added: "It's very difficult to say that the encampments themselves are what's creating the crime." Homeless settlements, Piquero noted, are often in crime-prone neighborhoods.

In fact, unhoused people are frequently the target of violent crime. San Francisco Chronicle columnist Nuala Bishari recently reported on "the epidemic of violence" against the unhoused. These attacks, she maintained, are the inevitable consequence of a "narrative that homeless people's personal failings led to their state of despair."

• **Most Unhoused People Lost Their Homes Due to Addiction and Mental Illness.** State Senator Scott Wiener stated it clearly: "Most homeless people are neither mentally ill nor addicted — most simply lack the financial means to afford the shortage-induced obscene cost of housing." Most, like Reyna De La Cruz, have lost jobs. Others work and still can't afford San Francisco's sky-high rents. Addiction and mental illness are not the causes of homelessness, but an all-too-frequent outcome of life on the streets.

The sight of unhoused people is distressing and has caused some of us to lash out at the most vulnerable in our community, both in word and deed. Our frustration must be focused our City's leader, Mayor Breed, who has failed to grapple with this humanitarian crisis. Breed must do better.

Julie Pitta is a member of the executive board of the Berniecrats. She is a former senior editor for Forbes Magazine and staff writer for the Los Angeles Times. You can email her at julie.pitta@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter: @JuliePitta.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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I am a senior lady who needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco or Daly City. I have excellent references, am quiet, read a lot, am good company and live by Christian values. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide me a home

CAR AND MOTORCYCLE SHOW

The second annual car and motorcycle show benefitting the only high school auto shop in SF will be held at George Washington High School (600 32nd Ave.) on Saturday, April 22. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free for attendees, $35/car or motorcycle entry. For more information, call GWHS Auto Shop Club at 650-703-6237 or 415-699-3933.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stances on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of points of view. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Felton Institute, a non-profit social services provider, has an opening for a community liaison: The part-time temporary position is with the Community Liaison Program, Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS). Job duties: Provide technical assistance by teaching basic computer skills on a smart device (smart phone, tablet or laptop). Skills include downloading and using the Zoom app, teaching Google Services, as well as navigating the internet to access resources helpful for daily living. Enjoy working with older adults and people with disabilities. Proficient in Cantonese and English. Send resume to Jobs@felton.org.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities in the Richmond and Sunset districts. Ask questions regarding how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop.

- **Friday, March 3,** 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Richmond Library (351 Ninth Ave.) Drop-in for a one-on-one session in English, Cantonese and Mandarin
- **Friday, March 10,** 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Anza Library (550 37th Ave./Geary Boulevard) Group session in English 1:30-2:30 p.m. Learn basic skills, features and apps on your smartphone and tablet. Drop-in session 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- **Friday, March 24,** 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Ortega Library (3223 Ortega St.) Group session in English, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Learn basic skills, features and apps on your smartphone and tablet. Drop-in session 2:30-3:30 p.m.

For more information, please call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

FREE EVENTS AT THE SF PUBLIC LIBRARY, RICHMOND BRANCH, 351 NINTH AVE., 415-355-5600

TEEN PROGRAM:

- **"Duct Tape Craft."** Create fun and easy duct tape crafts. Try your hand at creating a wallet, cell phone case or a bookmark. For ages 13-18. Supplies limited, no registration needed. Richmond Teen's Area. Wednesday, March 22, 2-3 p.m.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

- **"Jewish Folk Chorus of SF"** live performance. Under the direction of Lisa Sargent, now in its 97th year, they will sing songs, mostly in Yiddish, about life, work, hope and peace. Saturday, March 4, 2-3 p.m.
- **"Silent Book Club."** Bring any book (fiction or nonfiction) for a period of silent reading followed by a discussion when you share what you are reading with others. Club meets every other Wednesday. March 8, 3-5 p.m.
- **"Bel Canto Flutes."** Live performance of varied works for flute ensemble. Saturday, April 1, 1-2 p.m.

ADULT FILM PROGRAMS:

- **"Baran."** Romantic fable about an Iranian construction worker who falls in love with an Afghan refugee. PG, 94 min., 2001. Wednesday, March 1, 5:30-7:15 p.m.
- **"Fifi Howls from Happiness."** Documentary on artist Bahman Mohassess (1931 - 2010), the "Persian Picasso." Rotten Tomatoes rating of 100%. NR, 102 min., 2013. Thursday, March 9, 4-5:45 p.m.
- **"Children of Heaven."** Drama for kids and adults. A brother loses his sister's shoes, so they concoct a plan to make his shoes suffice. First Iranian film to receive a nomination for an Academy Award. PG, 89 min., 1997. Saturday, March 11, 3-4:30 p.m.
- **"A Tale of Love and Desire."** Drama for teens and adults. French Algerian teen Ahmed discovers sensual Arabic literature and falls in love with Farah. Rotten Tomatoes rating of 100%. NR, 102 min., 2021. Wednesday, March 15, 5:30-7:15 p.m.
- **Great Women Double Feature.** "Betty: They Say I'm Different." A doc on Betty Davis (1944 - 2022), Funk Queen and one-time wife of Miles Davis. (53 min., 2017) "bell hooks: Cultural Criticism & Transformation." A lecture and film clip talk by cultural critic bell hooks (1952 - 2021). Thursday, March 23, 4-6 p.m. (60 min., 1997)
- **"Golden Gate Girls: Esther Eng."** Documentary on Eng (1914-1970), San Francisco native, first woman to direct Chinese language film in the U.S. NR, 89 min., 2013. Thursday, March 30, 4-5:30 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy March birthday to Ramona Barker, Ryan Bermudez, Dabheyba Carney, Jashua Carter, Jasrrie Chang, Albert Chow, Francois Dermu, VMD PhD, Jett, Jasmine Gillies, Sarah K., Peter Nicoletti, TGP, Milady Rodriguez, Maddy and Ken R., Jessica Pontigo Sevier, Mike Sill, Brendan and Daniel VN, Gabriela Pacheco Ventura and Big Jim. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

HOUSING WANTED

Retired female journalist looking for part-time multi-month housesitting, sublet or private bedroom and bath in a house. Contact Carol Clurman, 703-946-6083, cclurman@gmail.com.

MEET THE EDITOR OF THE RICHMOND REVIEW

Meet the editor of the Richmond Review: You are invited to meet with Michael Durand, editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Bring your story ideas, feedback, suggestions, questions, announcement items and advertising inquiries. We are also welcoming new writers and photographers interested in contributing stories and photos. One Richmond storefront, 802 Clement St., every second Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. For more information, call 415-706-6428 or email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Scheduled appointments not necessary but appreciated.

NIGHT OF IDEAS

San Francisco Public Library presents Night of Ideas on Saturday, March 4, 7 p.m.-1a.m., at the San Francisco Main Library, 100 Larkin St. The Night of Ideas, the Bay Area's biggest celebration of creativity and critical thought, is back with more than 100 artists, activists and scholars. Free. For more information, go to nightofideas.org/san-francisco/, call 415-557-4400 or email publicaffairs@sfpl.org.

ON FOSTERING SPIRITUAL KINSHIP AND COMMUNITY

CIIS Public Programs presents On Fostering Spiritual Kinship and Community on Thursday, March 2, 6-7:30 p.m., online from San Francisco. Join Ayo Yetunde for a conversation that is a call and a primer for community-oriented models of well-being in our age of polarization and turmoil. Cost: Free, suggested donation of $10. For more information go to www.ciis.edu/public-programs/event-calendar/yetunde-ayo-march-2-2023, call 415-575-6175 or email publicprograms@ciis.edu.

ON REWRITING THE STORY OF BLACK WOMEN'S BODIES

CIIS Public Programs presents On Rewriting the Story of Black Women's Bodies on Wednesday, March 8, 6-7:30 p.m., at the California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission St., San Francisco. Join Jessica Wilson for a conversation that challenges us to rethink the politics of body liberation. Cost: Free, suggested donation of $10. For more info see www.ciis.edu/public-programs/event-calendar/wilson-jessica-march-8-2023 or call 415-575-6175 or email publicprograms@ciis.edu.

ONE RICHMOND SHOP EAT LOCAL FIRST (SELF) CARD

The SELF Initiative is an ongoing, comprehensive, open-ended program. Visit the One Richmond website for a listing of all participating businesses and describing the discounts or personalized promotions. Membership cards with a QR code are being distributed to families in the Richmond District, as well as to those who sign up to become a One Richmond member. Cardholders can scan the QR code to learn about specific merchant discounts or promotions and present their membership card at checkout to receive the appropriate discount. Pick up a card from The Richmond Neighborhood Center, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays, or visit One Richmond office, 802 Clement St., 1-5 p.m. weekdays. For more information, go to onerichmondsf.com/about-self-plan.

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Tyrone Bartoli has been a professional photographer since 1995. He is available for a wide range of photo shoots. Call for a free consultation: 415-846-7838. Also, check out his Instagram page @tyronebartoli. Ask for the Richmond Review discount. Learn more at TyroneBartoli.com.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying the "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

TAKING A BREAK

Jess Goldstein's crossword puzzle is scheduled to return next month. Previous puzzles and answers can be found at RichmondSunsetNews.com. Also, read Nancy DeStefanis's column online this month: RichmondSunsetNews.com.

VINCE'S TRASHY BIRTHDAY

Come help us celebrate the birthday of Vince Yuen, founder of Refuse Refuse, with a neighborhood cleanup! Meet up at the Richmond Recreation Center (251 18th Ave.) on Sunday, March 19, 10 a.m.-noon. All supplies provided and stay afterwards for drinks and treats. Sign up on the TogetherSF Mobilize page or email info@refuserefusesf.org with event name.

Announcements: $1 per word, 20 word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. We support small businesses: Free announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (20,000+ views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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‘Then and Now’: Clement Street near Fifth Avenue

Above: This 1943 photo shows Clement Street looking east toward Fifth Avenue and features the 2-line streetcar MSRy #255. The tower of Roosevelt Junior High is visible in background. *Photo to courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.*

Right: This recent photo shows the architecture of the neighborhood has not changed much, except the building on the southeast corner of Clement and Fifth has lost its Victorian facade. The streetcar and the rails are gone, and the design of the old cars has been replaced with sleeker, if less romantic, designs. The building at the far right, (A.E. Harris Wines and Liquors) which sold alcoholic beverages 80 years ago, is still in the business of selling alcohol, now as the Bitter End bar. The tower at Roosevelt is still visible, but the school is now called Roosevelt Middle School. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

Town Hall

Continued from page 1

whole,” Channing responded.

“The focus and priority of the City is to lead with services,” he said. “The question is, how do we compel people who don’t want to accept services? Do we leverage a law enforcement response if that is the decision? There are laws that dictate what law enforcement can or can’t do. Or do we leverage a public health offer?

“These issues do not exist in a vacuum; we really need to take a broad approach,” Channing said. “I think it’s the way to start addressing a problem, instead of just pushing issues from one block to the next.”

SF City Attorney David Chiu explained that SF City and County were successfully sued by the Coalition on Homelessness.

“Right around Christmas Eve, a federal judge granted a preliminary injunction in favor of the Coalition on Homelessness, essentially saying that we could not enforce a number of statutes that Capt. Canning and others in the City have enforced in order for us to move forward with resolving these encampments,” Chiu said.

“From the perspective of the City, it has, frankly, tied our hands and our ability to address the situation on our streets,” he said. “And so, a couple of weeks ago, I announced that we are going to be appealing the decision by the federal judge.”

He elaborated that a ruling in a federal appellate case mandated that if the City is going to enforce certain laws for the homeless, it needs to be able to provide shelter for them.

“It is unclear though on whether this law would apply if, on any particular night, there are 7,000 to 8,000 unhoused residents on our streets, but we have 3,000 to 4,000 shelter beds,” Chiu explained. “The question is, if we don’t have enough shelter for seven to eight thousand folks, should the City be required to all of a sudden provide another two or three thousand beds of shelter before we can move anyone off the streets?

“We don’t have that at this point, and what has been estimated is it will cost about $1.4 billion and probably take three to five more years for us to get there. So, what do we do in the meantime?”

San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu spoke with a standing-room-only crowd at a Richmond District Town Hall on Feb. 15 at the Richmond Recreation Center. *Photo Thomas K. Pendergast.*

District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan brought up street closures and driving restrictions, like on the Upper Great Highway, JFK Drive and with the Slow Streets plan.

“Some of those issues really pose a challenge for us for the north-south travels and I want to acknowledge that,” Chan said. “We’re going to continue to work with SFMTA on resolving some of those concerns. The SFMTA is under the jurisdiction of the SFMTA Board of Directors, appointed by the mayor; (the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency) is an independent body making some of those decisions.”

She also mentioned the Geary Bus Rapid Transit (Geary BRT) plan and the decision to create transit-only side-running lanes, as opposed to center-running lanes.

“One thing that we couldn’t mitigate, we tried to mitigate, is along Geary between 15th Avenue all the way to 28th Avenue,” she said. “Right now, it’s angled parking. In order for (SFMTA) to do that (Geary BRT), they want to switch it to parallel parking, which then is going to be a parking loss and pose a challenge also for some of the merchants, like Joe’s Ice Cream, that have shared spaces.

“We have asked now, officially, for SFMTA to postpone this switch from angled parking to parallel parking to much later, so that would allow our small businesses to recover.”

The pandemic also affected graffiti abatement because of the extra financial burden it would impose on businesses to remove it.

“We’re really going to reach out to some of these property owners and small businesses, really thinking about graffiti removal,” Chan said.

This includes the derelict Alexandria Theatre.

“The sign came down a few weeks ago because of the storm,” she said. “We’re in conversation with both the City’s Planning Department, the Department of Building Inspection as well as the property owners themselves to say, ‘what is the future for this space?’”

Before the pandemic, the developers received approval from the Planning Department to install swimming pools, build classrooms for a learning center and business offices there.

“They informed me, when I first took office during the pandemic, that they had to pause the construction because the financing was really difficult

Continued on page 13

POLICE BLOTTER

Assault, Attempted Homicide, Catalytic Converter Theft, Conspiracy: 4600 Block of California Street, Jan. 17, 4:22 a.m.

Richmond midnight units responded to a report of a catalytic converter theft in progress.

Richmond Station officers, driving a marked black-and-white patrol car, spotted the suspect vehicle and attempted a traffic stop, but was unsuccessful.

The suspect vehicle took off and the officers lost visual contact. A grid search was conducted.

Additional officers spotted the suspect vehicle driving recklessly with the car's headlights off. It then came to a stop near a sidewalk. As the two-man Richmond unit got closer to the suspect vehicle, three suspects were seen exiting the vehicle. The suspects then began running in two different directions.

Officers followed the two suspects fleeing, which led to a foot pursuit where the two suspects split off again, in separate directions. During the foot pursuit, one of the suspects fired several shots at the officers. The officers heard the shots and saw the muzzle flash. The gun was discarded to the ground and recovered. The suspect continued running from police while officers were giving lawful commands to stop. The suspect grabbed a rock, smashed an access window with it, then jumped down 20 feet to the basement level of large building.

A perimeter was set up. SFPD declared it a critical incident which brought specialist teams, tactical teams and a hostage negotiator team to the scene, along with a multitude of officers and investigators.

The officers that were shot at had no injuries and were taken to a safe staging area where all available resources were available for them.

One of the suspects was detained, identified and later arrested after a thorough investigation. The suspect vehicle was recovered with 5 cut-off catalytic converters, a floor jack and cutting tools inside. No collateral damage to any persons or vehicles were observed or reported. The case was assigned to the Investigative Unit.

Aggravated Assault with Force, Elder Abuse: 600 Block of 47th Avenue, Jan. 26, 10:58 a.m.

The victim, a 91-year-old female, was gardening outside in front of her house. Security video of the incident shows the suspect (unprovoked and without speaking) walk up to the victim from behind. The victim was crouched down, tending to her garden with her back to the suspect. The suspect then punched the victim in the head with a right fist and then walked away. The victim fell forward to the ground sustaining a two-inch cut above her right eye that required several stiches.

The investigating sergeant assigned to case reviewed video and canvased the area. While in the area of the incident, the sergeant recognized the suspect from security video walking on the sidewalk. The suspect was detained, identified and arrested after a thorough investigation. The suspect was wearing most of the same clothing from the incident of the vicious assault.

In an interview, the suspect mentioned using drugs, being up for five days and hitting the victim in order to go back to jail. The suspect said he did not feel bad.

Discharging a Firearm in a Grossly Negligent Manner, Terrorizing by Interfering With Religious Worship, Terrorist Threats: 3600 Block of Balboa Street, Feb. 1, 7:20 p.m.

A representative of a Jewish synagogue reported that a suspect entered the synagogue the previous night after worship while members were having dinner. The unknown suspect spoke "broken Russian," then pulled out a gun and started shooting.

Witnesses said no one was injured and there was no damage to property. The suspect made a reference to "Mossad" before walking out. Victims said they believed this was a possible hate crime directed towards Jewish people or Israel. All victims felt very threatened by the suspect firing shots and what the suspect said.

SFPD believes this person to be the same suspect from an SFPD case on Jan. 31 who walked into the Balboa Theater on 3600 block Balboa Street and brandished a firearm (but did not discharge the weapon).

SFPD Special Investigation Unit confirmed suspect's ID and address along with multiple firearms registered to the suspect. A search warrant was obtained, and a plan was formulated to safely execute the search warrant.

The suspect was detained leaving his residence without incident and was later arrested. A search revealed evidence related to the incidents, which was seized. The suspect is believed to be the same subject for both incidents. The case was assigned to the Special Investigative Unit.

Town Hall

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for them and for them to move forward with that," Chan said. "I have suggested perhaps affordable housing is something that we can do. It's something that we're going to work on."

The City assessed the monetary value of the site and Chan said she offered this same amount from the City to purchase the property.

"The developer and the property owner turned it down," she said. "And asking, in fact, for double of what was assessed and offered; during the pandemic, mind you."

A woman expressed concern about the lack of attention that the Covid pandemic has been getting lately.

Chiu said that for three years during the pandemic, his office had a team of attorneys come up with the legal bulwark for the City to do all the changes that they did.

"So, the emergency orders that were all drafted by our office, were all justified with the exigencies of the day. Now, they are going to expire," he said. "We are allowed to declare a state of emergency when there are the indicia of an emergency that is continuing. The end of the official San Francisco emergency orders will coincide with Gov. Newsom's end of the state orders, which is going to be at the end of this month.

"Thankfully, COVID rates have gone down, but they have not disappeared. And so, it is important for everyone to take the precautions that you believe you need to take.

"I look out onto this room, about half of you are masked; half of you are not. That makes sense. We cannot require people to be masked when the science at the state level have lifted the emergencies. But that doesn't mean that we can't, as a community, continue to take precautions," Chiu said.

"I am proud of the fact that our mayor and our Board of Supervisors, in lock step, agreed to move quickly into a state of emergency. And once we were there, to do all sorts of things quickly and that is what allowed San Francisco to be a real shining example of how you navigate during these tough times."

Letter to the Editor

Continued from page 7

the residents and local businesses. The only way to reach all of the voters in a city-wide election is through expensive television, internet, radio and print advertising, and mass mail and email campaigns. Rather than serving the common good, supervisors would more likely be beholden to the interests of the wealthy donors who made it possible for them to be in office.

We saw what out-of-town Republican political donations did in the recall of Chesa Boudin. A popularly elected district attorney was recalled after right-wing recall supporters raised $7.2 million, most of it from billionaires, in a campaign that highlighted disinformation, lies and fear-mongering targeting the Chinese-American community. Mayor London Breed's rise to political prominence was paid for by billionaire venture capitalist, Ron Conway. Let's keep money out of politics and keep District elections.

David Romano

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Commentary

Sandra Lee Fewer

Gun Violence Out of Control

I intended to write about another subject for this month's column, but I could not ignore the need to discuss guns in this country after the recent discharge of a firearm at the local Jewish community space on Balboa Street, and the mass shootings in California. It should be horrifying to us that a person would enter a public space and shoot randomly at walls and windows with seniors present. The fact that there have been 67 mass shootings in 2023 so far should give us all pause.

In September of 2019, when the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution declaring the National Rifle Association (NRA) a domestic terrorist organization, we received many emails, phone calls, threats and personal attacks from people all over the country. The most upsetting were the ones I received from people who live in the Richmond District. They sent letters praising the NRA, noting the good works they do and how unfair and frankly "stupid" we were to make such a declaration.

That declaration, by the way, had no "teeth." It was just a statement. And yet the anger it brought on had the sheriffs roaming the halls with bomb-sniffing dogs and added surveillance of City Hall. One resident even told my office that he had purchased a life membership to the NRA because "we had to be taught a lesson."

Well, I think it's time we all learn a lesson. Our use of guns in this country is out of control and the truth is that the NRA is a huge part of the problem. The NRA can still give gun-safety lessons, but it needs to recognize that we have a severe gun violence issue in this country, and it is literally killing us.

For full transparency: My father owned a .30-06 hunting rifle, and he was a certified rifle instructor with a life membership to the NRA. I spent many Sunday mornings with him as he opened and set up the shooting range and I remember my sister and I spending afternoons gathering spent shells. However, those memories have been replaced by a fear of the harm guns can do and have done to so many people just doing everyday activities.

As my husband and I walked around Lake Merced a couple of weeks ago, we passed by the wood fence outside of the police firing range. The sound of guns firing was constant and loud. I imagined what it might be like to hear that sound in a shopping mall, school, grocery store, restaurant, movie theater, dance hall, church or even a small Russian Jewish community space on Balboa. The sound of gunshots through the wood fence gave me a real gut feeling of the fear and panic that sound produces. When we must teach school-age children what to do if a shooter enters a school, we have lost our way. Many say we should train teachers on how to use guns and have one available in every classroom. That is beyond ridiculous. Ask any teacher you know about this idea, and they will tell you that's crazy.

So where are the solutions? Do we just shrug our shoulders and say it's horrible that children have been victims of mass shootings but that's life? Or do we demand that our policy makers look to real solutions? A real solution – and this just a part of the solution – is the partnership with the State Attorney General's Office and our District Attorney's Office to sue the manufacturers of ghost guns. This partnership was created and developed when former District Attorney Chesa Boudin filed a lawsuit against three manufacturers of ghost guns and the state attorney general signed on as a partner.

For those who are unfamiliar with what ghost guns are, they are kits and privately made firearms that are untraceable by design, lacking serial numbers and other identifying markings. Ghost guns are unassembled guns that people can buy through the mail and assemble at home. They have no tracking information and there is no public record of who has purchased them or how many they have purchased.

In 2021, about 20,000 suspected ghost guns were recovered by law enforcement in criminal investigations and reported to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The figure marked a tenfold increase from 2016, according to the White House.

In San Francisco, police seized 1,089 guns in 2021, about 20% of which were ghost guns. Just five years prior in 2016, ghost guns made up less than 1% of total gun seizures. The City's police department also reported that nearly half of the firearms recovered in homicide cases in 2020 were ghost guns. This is an upwardly moving trend as people discover that the firearm they used to kill someone cannot be traced back to them.

Another disturbing fact is that minors and prohibited purchasers can buy and build these guns, most of them AR-15 assault rifles. Eighty percent of mass shooters used an assault rifle. This is not about the Second Amendment. We are not talking about muskets, we are talking about assault rifles that can and do kill many people very quickly, including law enforcement officers. President Joe Biden also instituted new regulations for ghost guns which require manufacturers of these guns to be licensed and perform background checks. It also requires the manufacturers to add serial numbers to the gun kits. Gun Owners of America has promised to sue to halt this legislation. And the debate goes on … while we have 67 mass shootings in just two months of 2023.

It's time for all of us to recognize that our way of living is jeopardized by gun violence. The "school yard fight" has evolved into the shooting of tens of thousands of people, and attending something as simple as a parade could cost you your life – or worse, the lives of your children.

The government should do what it should have done thousands of lives ago. It should have made these military weapons illegal to be privately owned. Common sense legislation for the common good.

"Thoughts and prayers won't stop a speeding bullet." – Dr. Da Shanne Stokes

Sandra Lee Fewer is a fourth-generation Chinese-American San Franciscan, former Board of Education commissioner, former member of the SF Board of Supervisors representing the Richmond District and has lived in the Richmond for more than 60 years.

Greenhouse

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continue to thrive. The caterpillars, capable of traveling a quarter of a mile, can also find pipevine growing in the nearby Redwood Grove during the transition.

Wong is personally responsible for re-introducing the California Pipevine Swallowtails to San Francisco, raising them in his backyard and transferring them to the Botanical Garden and elsewhere. He has been raising butterflies as a hobby since he was in elementary school.

Japanese Tea Garden

There are also new design plans for the Japanese Tea Garden. By this fall, the plaza surrounding the Tea Garden's newly restored pagoda should be completely redesigned and landscaped. The project is being led by Hoichi Kurisu, renowned for his construction of Japanese gardens worldwide.

The new plaza will open up after removal of the old fencing surrounding the Pagoda. It will also be more flexible in its potential uses, allowing for public gatherings and celebrations.

Adding to its authenticity, the new plaza will incorporate stones donated from the ancient Tatsuyama quarry in Takasago, Japan. There are also plans to restore the wooden long bridge in the Tea Garden, perhaps opening a second entrance that will reduce lines at the front gate.

As a reminder, San Francisco residents can now enjoy all three gardens – the Botanical Garden, Japanese Tea Garden and Conservatory of Flowers – for free. Be prepared to show proof of residency, such as a California driver's license or ID showing your San Francisco address, a recent utility bill, lease, or other official document showing your San Francisco address as well as a photo ID. Digital proof on your smart phone (i.e., photo of your ID, screenshot of your utility bill) is acceptable.

If you would like to help in the effort to bring the California Pipevine Swallowtail back to San Francisco, plant some pipevine (a.k.a., Dutchman's Pipe or Aristolochia californica) in your garden.

The plaza around the pagoda in the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park will be redesigned and landscaped. *Photo by Linda Badger.*

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Resource Fair

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time possibilities for youth across San Francisco.

"The energy of the people who are here to facilitate this is incredible, and the diversity of city entertainment options and education options for children is so cool," she said. As Schiffman admired Sierra dancing along with the choreography of the Zumba team and interacting with the pom-pom STEM projects, she said that local events, such as the Resource Fair, help make living in expensive districts of San Francisco worthwhile.

"The City can feel very hard to raise a family here," Shiffman said. "It's an expensive place to live and it's all divided up. But then you come (to the Summer Resource Fair) and you realize how many programs there are and how many people are stoked to get kids involved. It's an indication of what's out there and reminds me to get involved and see what the city has."

Jessica Huey, program specialist of the Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services team, recognized the request for "more information for people with disabilities regardless of their age" within her department. Huey also hopes to increase awareness for the needs of children with disabilities through her role in the therapeutic recreation branch and with the citywide collaborators accompanying booths standing alongside her.

Setting up sensory-active equipment, such as a crash pad, balance beam and a hug-simulating steam roller in the "movement chill zone" at the County Fair Building, Huey encouraged children and adults alike to discover the benefits of the engagement tools' sensory input.

"It's really good for the general public to see that the specialized equipment is pretty universal, and anyone can use it and learn a little bit about our sensory needs," Huey said.

The recreational leader also applauded the collaborative initiative groups of the Therapeutic Recreation Inclusion Services team, including SF Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF), Golden Gate Regional Center and the Special Education Department of the San Francisco Unified School District (SPED).

"We're really trying to work together as partners and fill the need for programs for people with disabilities," Huey said. "It's an ongoing work in progress. We're trying to get other programs to be more accessible and inclusive and provide more support."

Tower-building with materials from nature was a fun activity at the fair. *Photo by Kate Quach.*

Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor Moira Zacharakis sits beside Julia Martin, ombudsperson for special education, communicating to fair-goers and families about education options that occur over the summer and extend into the fall.

"This is a fabulous event for all of our families within the City to understand what's available to them over the summer and throughout the school year," Zacharakis said. "We are trying to promote clarity for our students who have individualized education plans so that they know what their options are over the summer."

As the SPED representatives echoed Tobin's understanding of positive social interactions through summer programs, Martin displayed hopes of continuing to work with DCYF and the therapeutic recreation team to "make sure that all the camps are perfectly set up to accommodate students with disabilities and provide the support they need."

With anticipation to expand opportunities for children and families with disabilities, Tobin and Huey addressed the community and staff effort to broaden their resources and increase their accessibility.

"We're really working on recruiting staff who are trained and interested in working with people with disabilities so we can offer more outside of Rec. and Park and outside of the small nonprofit where we are," said Huey. "It takes a village and a community just to get us all together and be supportive to one another."

Learn more about the resource fair at dcyf.org/summer-resource-fairs.

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